SHRI M.M. JACOB: Sir, confusion may not come if the reply is understood in another aspect. The assistance is arrived at after discussion. After all, this is given on the basis of the amount that the Maharashtra Government is able to raise from their own side...(*Interruptions*).

SHRI RAM KAPSE: Sir, my question is whether they have accepted all the proposals or curtailed them.

SHRI S.B. CHAVAN: Sir, the assistance for modernisation has to be given to all the States and it depends upon the availability of funds with the respective State Governments also because they have to make matching contributions. It is quite possible that some of the States must have got more. Some of the States, because they could not raise the resources, could not get the same. So, we have to see that there is balance created amongst all the States so that their requirements can be fully met.

New Telephone Connections

*798. SHRI K. PRADHANI: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) the gap between the demand and supply of new telephone connections in the country particularly in Orissa; and

(b) the time by which the gap is likely to be filled up?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICAIONS (SHRI P.V. RANGAYYA NAIDU): (a) As on 31.7.1991, the gap between demand and supply for new telephone connections (reflected as "Waiting List") in the country is 12.69 lakhs and for Orissa, it is 5581.

(b) The draft plan proposals for the period 1990-95 envisage eliminating this gap for rural, backward and tribal areas as also areas served by exchanges of less than 5000 line size and reducing the waiting period substantially for larger towns by 1995.

SHRI K. PRADHANI: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the waiting list in Orissa, specially in tribal areas is almost nil. The reason behind this is that the open wire system in tribal areas and forest areas is not working properly because heavy electric lines passing from various hydel projects, intercept these lines. Secondly, in jungle and forest areas, the thieves take away these lines and sell them away and it becomes very difficult for the Telephone Department to repair them. In view of this, the Government of India have decided since long to switch over to the microwave system. They have started the work but it is not completed. May I know from the hon. Minister by what time they are going to complete this microwave system in the district?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI RAJESH PILOT): Mr. Speaker, Sir, it is a fact that in some of the areas in the country, specially the tribal areas and the backward areas, we have not been able to reach the connectivity targets. We have taken a decision, as I have said in the previous question, that in each Panchayat we are trying to connect on RG and WG. This is the one easiest possible technique available with us where we can connect a panchayat to the Tehsil headquarters or to the nearest place where STD is available. So, this is under consideration. The microwave system is also being planned. I would give further details of the system to the hon. Member.

SHRI K. PRADHANI: Sir, they have installed some telephones on this microwave system in various post offices such as P.V.Os. As the transmission towers are very low, the engineers say that the telephones are not working properly. May I know from the hon. Minister whether the Government will take up this matter and improve the facility?

SHRI RAJESH PILOT: We have taken up this matter. Wherever connectivity is

given, it must be given functional. There is no use of putting an instrument there and saying that the Panchayat is connected or the area is connected. We are looking into the serviceability and also improvement. We are getting reports that there are substantial improvements. It is a continuous process. We are working on it. I assure the hon. Members that we are also of the similar feelings and we are working on this.

[*Translation*]

SHRI HARIN PATHAK: As the hon. Minister has informed, there are 6 to 7 big industrial cities in the country. Even in those industrial cities there is a waiting list for 3 to 4 years. These industrial cities are those who are doing their business inside and outside the country and are contributing to the economy of the whole nation. I would like to know from the hon. Minister the time by which the waiting lists of big cities like Calcutta, Bombay, Ahmedabad, Delhi, Madras would be cleared?

SHRI RAJESH PILOT: If we go through the trend, we will find that the waiting list has increased from 8.43 lakh in 1985 to 21 lakh this year. Out of this, 2.71 lakh connections were released earlier, but now this figure has reached 5 point something. Not that the number of connections released is not increasing, but the demand is also increasing, and our growth is not keeping pace with the increasing demand. Earlier too, while replying to the supplementary question, I had told that we were paying attention to the production and were also capitalizing on the new industrial policy fully. Thus, we are raising the production in the communication sector also. Till date our production capacity is approximately 20 to 22 lakh but we are able to produce only 10 to 11 lakh, our production is not commensurate to our capacity. The Government has taken certain measures in this direction and we want that the supply should match the demand. We hope that by the year 1995, the gap between demand and supply will be neutralised in regions which have exchanges of 5000 lines. As regards the big exchanges with ten thousand lines or more, it is our endeavour to see that the waiting list is cleared in next two to three years.

[*English*]

SHRI RAO RAM SINGH: I would like to ask the hon. Minister about one thing. Just now he has mentioned that there is a scheme for providing public call offices in all the villages panchayats and the radio telephone instruments are being provided in the village panchayats. What exactly is this scheme? Is it an experimental scheme or has it been approved? Because the villages are complaining that they are not able to operate these radio telephones and P.C.Os. very satisfactorily.

SHRI RAJESH PILOT: Sir, it is a tested scheme and it has proved very functional in most of the places where the connectivity was there. From some of the districts in Uttar Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala and Assam good reports have come. As I mentioned in one of the meetings, villagers said that if nothing works in this function, at least the instrument of C-DOT technique is working. Even though it is not kept in a very careful condition, yet still it is working very satisfactorily. After that we took a decision that we will try to connect all the gram panchayats of the country by March, 1995. If the hon. Member has any specific case where the system is not functional because of the technical problem or any other problem, I can look into that particular case. We have received reports and inputs from other parts of the country. But if any hon. Member has any suggestion to improve the system of its functioning in any gram panchayat, the Government will welcome it and improve upon it.

SHRI CHETAN P.S. CHAUHAN: It is very nice that the Minister has said that 21 lakh telephone connections have been given in metropolitan cities and bigger towns. I would like to know from the hon. Minister, through you, whether any percentage has been fixed for the big towns and the small towns and the villages for providing telephone connection any percentage has been

fixed like 80:20 or 60:40 and so on.

SHRI RAJESH PILOT: Sir, the idea is to connect the whole country and efforts are towards that direction. Now, it is demand-cum-supply thing in both the sectors. We cannot say, 'It is all right, we will give so much for rural areas and so much for urban areas'. It depend upon where the demand is. Maybe in one of the urban areas we have very less demand and in the rural areas more demand. It is totally a serving Department, and we go with the intention of where we can serve and give connectivity for efficient communication through telephone connection.

Cotton Production

*799. SHRI M.R. KADAMBUR JANARTHANAN: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) the estimated production of Cotton during 1991-92 season;

(b) the porposed increase in support price of unginned cotton for 1991-92 season;

(c) whether there is any scarcity of cotton in the country;

(d) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(e) the steps taken by the Government to overcome this shortage?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI MULLAPPALLY RAMACHANDRAN): (a) Sowing of cotton crop of 1991-92 season is still in progress in some of the States. It is too early to indicate estimated production of cotton during 1991-92 season. However, rainfall and weather conditions during the current season in major cotton growing States have generally been favourable. According to the present indications, production of cotton during 1991-92 is expected to be higher by 12-16 lakh bales than the last year's production of 100 lakh bales.

(b) The Government has fixed the minimum support prices for the basic varieties of cotton namely F-414/H-777 and H-4 at Rs. 695 and Rs. 840 per quintal respectively. This shows an increase in prices over those for 1990-91 cotton season by Rs. 75 and Rs. 90 per quintal respectively.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) and (e) Do not arise.

SHRI M.R. KADAMBUR JANARTHANAN: Mr. Speaker, Sir, through you I want to know this from the hon. Minister. As you also come from Maharashtra, you know the answer. They are evading the answer by saying that 'it is too early to indicate estimated production of cotton during 1991-92 season.' But in the same para they are saying...

MR. SPEAKER: No, no. You don't to read the reply please. You come to the question.

SHRI M.R.KADAMBUR JANARTHANA: Mr. Speaker, Sir, because there is contrast in the answer, I have to tell that. Then only I can ask the question.

MR. SEAKER: No, no. You don't have to repeat by reading.

SHRI M.R. KADAMBUR JANARTHANAN: Because there is a contrast in the answer. [*Interruptions*].

MR. SPEAKER: You are taking the time of the other Members.

[*Interruptions*]

SHRI M.R. KADAMBUR JANARTHANAN: Sir, recently the Cotton Advisory Board just 10 days back have announced in the papers about a cotton exhibition of 130 lakh bales. But in the Agriculture Ministry they are saying, it is not there. Therefore, from this answer I come to know that there is no contact between the Cotton Advisory Board and the Agriculture Board. Therefore, keep-